

The International and Local Policing in Peace Operations Workshop



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BACKGROUND

The role of international police and need for local police reform has become an increasingly important aspect of peace-building and improved governance across the globe. Multinational efforts—most notably by the US, UN, EU and NATO—have resulted in increased expectations and responsibilities of international and local police. Police promotion of public order, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights also have become important supporting tasks for stabilizing a nation-state and setting the conditions for long-term development.

The German-led Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), in cooperation with the German Federal Foreign Office, hosted an “International and Local Policing in Peace Operations Workshop” for practitioners, academics and policymakers in Berlin, Germany December 14 through 17, 2006. The intent of the workshop was to discuss recent operational experiences in an attempt to determine common themes and issues which need to be addressed as the international community pursues efforts to stabilize and develop fragile and failing states.

Workshop attendees represented a wealth of recent experience, as well as a background in numerous past peace-building missions around the world. Of the mission perspectives represented, several ongoing operations dominated discussions of challenges facing the quest for long-term stability. Common lessons from Afghanistan, East Timor and Kosovo were reinforced by secondary discussions of approaches to policing in Sierra Leone, Palestine, Haiti and Bosnia-Herzegovina. While framing the frank discussions around learning from past actions, the looming potential for intervention in Darfur, and potential increased role of the European Union in Afghanistan, tempered the discussion and drove debate into practical terms which may inform future policy debates by UN, EU and US participants.

FREQUENT TASKS AND COMMON CHALLENGES FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICING EFFORTS

Both international and local police have been increasingly charged with the responsibility of assisting the military in stabilizing the security situation, as well as reforming and building the capacity of local police programs. These tasks have been

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common operational conditions facing policing efforts were identified as:

- a. an ineffective or corrupt police force spanning from the ministry to the individual policeman level;
- b. local police who are out-gunned, out-manned and out-paid as compared to their adversaries;
- c. illicit power structures to include organized crime and judicial systems, which either undermine the efforts of the government or reinforce oppressive regimes;
- d. efforts to train and educate “new” policemen are easily undermined without adequate international mentorship in the field where new policeman put theory and training into practice;
- e. voids in public order promulgated by military intervention and the elimination of overt influence of anti-democratic reform elements;
- f. an initial window of opportunity – the “golden hour” during which an international presence is required to bridge the gap between military capability and action and the need for civilian face on public order and safety;
- g. unsynchronized and inadequately resourced international efforts to improve the rule of law and link efforts with the military’s intervention and efforts to stabilize the security environment;
- h. an international police presence and effort which is late, understrength and without the required mandate to operate effectively;
- i. parallel or unclear command and control relationships with the military elements on the ground; and
- j. political pressure to focus on a shallow exit strategy without effective institutional safeguards, and without a coherent “entry” strategy that includes the root governance causes for instability.

Although seemingly obvious challenges to specific peace operations, the fact that there was general consensus supported by illustrative examples from practitioners of past and current missions was encouraging.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

While political and budgetary realities often supersede the logic of pre-mission planning applied by executors on the ground, there were several recommendations of the

workshop that are, or should be, pursued by the international community. The challenge of bridging the gap between armed intervention and establishment of a near-term secure environment must be tempered with the need to develop the systems and capacity of a local government to maintain its own public order and safety. Often, many of the factors which fuel instability are driven by, or at least shaped by, a lack of an effective internal security and judicial system that supports the needs of the population. Whether these root causes are illicit power structures, criminalization of the force, ineffective judicial and penal systems, or dismal economic growth and poor health standards, these factors are often related to public order and safety. To assist in improving the public order and related security environment, the workshop attendees recommended several actions that need to be met if any true progress is to be made in current and future international efforts:

- a. establish a stand-by police capacity of Formed Police Units that can deploy in concert with military units to help bridge the gap between traditional military functions and public order operations more suitable for trained policemen.
- b. establish a pool of police reform trainers and mentors who will deploy early on to help fill the void in community policing and build reformed police capacity from the ministry to patrolman level.
- c. establish an integrated military-civilian rule of law assessment team that can conduct mission planning in conjunction with military planning efforts and follow in-country to provide the foundation for an interagency team that can synchronize the development and reform efforts.
- d. establish a joint intel sharing relationship between the military and the police—close the gap between intelligence (military) and evidence (police) collection efforts in order to gain efficiencies and improved operational capabilities.
- e. clearly define the role that the local police will play in the future of the failed or failing state, then package the appropriate skill-sets of trainers, mentors and resources to fit the requirement (e.g., community police, border police, counter-narcotics, crowd control units, criminal investigations, witness protection).
- f. clearly define the command relationships as supported and supporting between military and police during the different phases of post-intervention operations.
- g. develop an entry strategy which includes a holistic approach to stability that includes application of resources towards the gaining and maintaining of effective rule of law systems. In addition, insure the exit strategy

includes continued engagement at adequate levels to apply appropriate safeguards on the performance of police and the criminal justice system.

While the issues and recommendations raised by the workshop participants were rooted in past experiences, planners and policy analysts from the UN and EU plan to use these past experiences to tackle today's issues. Several countries identified ongoing national efforts to support the development of a myriad of deployable police capacities. Both the UN's and EU's recent efforts to establish deployable Rule of Law Assessment Teams and Formed Police Units is an encouraging sign. PKSOI is currently working with the USG agencies as well as the UN and EU to help foster an increase in police capacities that will assist in filling the void in public security in fragile and failing states.

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